Wildfire Today
Wildfire and fire aviation news from around the world

US Wildland Fire Service partially funded from significant EPA cuts

Hunter Bassler | June 5, 2026

Credit: USDA Forest Service photo by Jace James USDA Forest Service photo by Jace James.

It's been nearly half a year since the U.S. Wildland Fire Service was formally launched, but the new agency has gone without funding since. Lawmakers may soon change that.

The U.S. House Committee on Appropriations submitted its funding plan for the Department of the Interior, the environment and related agencies this week, with a specific focus on the fire service. Lawmakers said the funding was in line with the Trump Administration's proposal to unify the DoI's firefighting activities.

The nearly $1.2 billion in proposed funding for the Wildland Fire Service is a fraction of the original $6.5 billion proposed for the service in the 2026 appropriations act, which was blocked by a bipartisan group of Senators. Lawmakers were allegedly only able to get the $1.2 billion by significantly cutting the funding of the Environmental Protection Agency.

"In order to fund these priorities at necessary levels, the Committee has reduced funding for the majority of accounts in the bill," lawmakers said in their funding report. "This includes a reduction of $1,781,584,000, or 20 percent, reduction to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) below the fiscal year 2026 enacted level."

The Republican and Democratic Senators who previously blocked the funding said they couldn't endorse the consolidation of federal wildland firefighting forces from both the Department of the Interior and the U.S. Forest Service, which manages more than two-thirds of the nation's firefighting resources, into a single agency. They said such a combination of resources could only be approved by an act of Congress, and ordered the agency to conduct a study on the feasibility of such a consolidation.

The House Committee's members acknowledged the study, and said the Trump Administration is in the process of contracting with an independent research organization to complete the study.

The funding proposal addressed numerous other wildland fire subjects, including:

- $2.6 billion for wildland fire management under the U.S. Forest Service.
- $185 million for hazardous fuels management activities, including $18 million for the Community Wood Energy Program's sawmilling equipment.
- $5 million for forest restoration and seedling replanting activities, specifically in the Pacific Region.
- $3 million for Wildland Urban Interface fire research.
- $2.5 million for purchasing generators for Tribal Health Programs to mitigate issues for de-energization protocols during wildfires.
- $1.6 million to the Forest Service for AI wildfire modeling research near the National Interagency Fire Center.

Click here to read the full report and the full funding bill.

Comments

Tom June 6, 2026 at 3:42 am

Be interesting to see what comes out of the Forest Service contract, which I understand is being developed under a Request for Quotes rather than as a Request for Proposals. One would hope that the contract will produce a thoughtful analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of combining its fire program with DOI, as well as metrics to measure results of such a combination. So, more thought put into the benefits and drawbacks of moving the FS fire program out of the FS than was done with the simple stroke of an executive pen with the DOI fire programs, with details to come in a transition plan, also known as flying the plane while building it.

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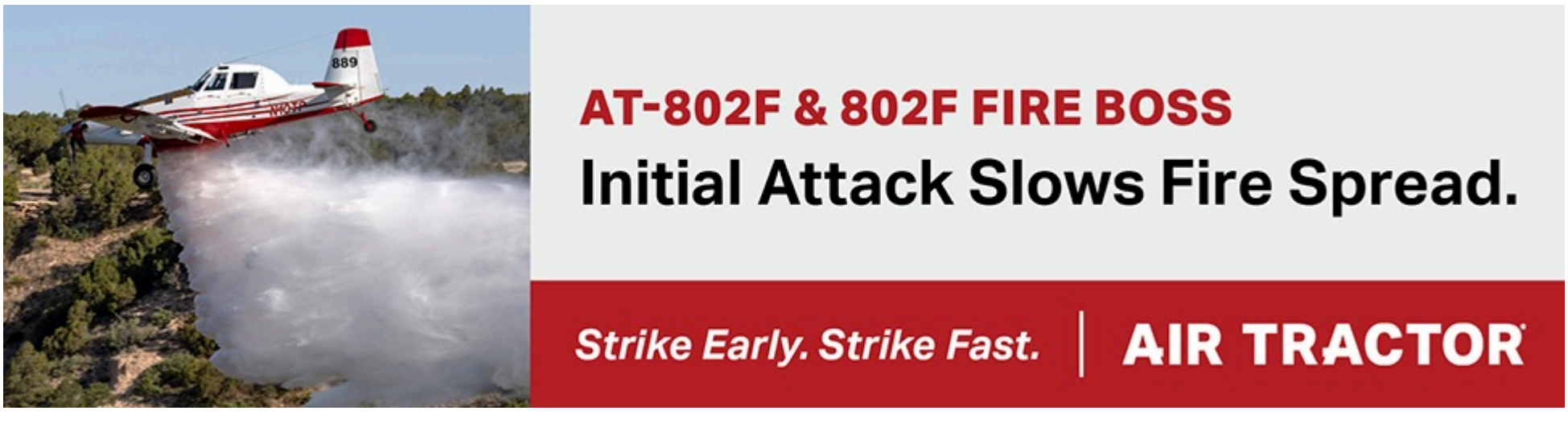

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